

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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R 012220Z FEB 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM

COGARD POLAD

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 1 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. GVN MOVES ON SPRATLYS. SHIPLER (NYT) QUOTES  
MILITARY SOURCES THAT ABOUT 120 SVN SOLDIERS SENT  
TO CHINESE-CLAIMED SPRATLYS, BUT NO CHINESE ENCOUNTERED.  
LANDING UNCONFIRMED THOUGH SOME REPORTS SAY 5 ISLANDS  
OCCUPIED. SHIPLER SEES MOVE AS APPARENT ATTEMPT  
TO HEAD OFF OCCUPATION BY CHINESE, CITES OPINION  
OF EXPERTS THAT UNDERSEA OIL MAY BE IN AREA. SOME  
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DIPLOMATS BELIEVE OIL EXPLAINS RECENT CHINESE INTEREST

IN ISLANDS. SOME GVN OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, FAVOR MILITARY INTERPRETATION AND FEAR RECENT CHINESE MOVES PRESAGE POSSIBLE NAVAL BLOCKADE OR TURN-OVER OF ISLANDS TO VC. SHIPLER WONDERS WHAT VC WOULD DO WITH THEM, SINCE THEY ARE TOO SMALL TO SUPPORT MILITARY BASES AND HAVE NO RESOURCES EXCEPT GUANO AND SWALLOW-NESTS. SHIPLER OBSERVES THAT PARACELS BATTLE IGNITED SVN NATIONAL PRIDE, AND THAT DEFENDERS RELEASED BY PRC ARE TO RECEIVE HEROES' WELCOME.

2. SAIGON MIL SOURCES SAY SVN TASK FORCE HEADING FOR SPRATLYS IS UNDER THIEU'S ORDERS TO OCCUPY ISLANDS, BUT NOT PROVOKE TROUBLE WITH ROC GARRISON ON ONE

ISLAND. SAME SOURCES SAY 200 MILITIAMEN TO BE PUT ASHORE ON 5 UNINHABITED ISLANDS. MOVE TAKES TAIWANESE DIPLOMATS IN SAIGON BY SURPRISE. TAIPEI SOURCES SAY ROC WOULD "UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES" RENOUNCE CLAIM ON SPRATLYS, WOULD MAINTAIN GARRISON THERE BUT TRY TO AVOID "ANY MILITARY ENGAGEMENT" AND EXERCISE "SELF-RESTRAINT IN THE EXTREME" (UPI BALTO N-A 1/31, PHINQ, NYDN). GVN HAS HAD TROOPS ON PARTS OF SPRATLYS SINCE AUGUST. NO IMMEDIATE REACTION TO LATEST GVN MOVE BY PEKING (AP SUN, CHITRIB). GVN MOVE TO SPRATLYS COULD LEAD TO ANOTHER CONFRONTATION WITH CHINESE (CSM). REUTER SAYS VIETS ALREADY LANDED. TAIWAN MAINTAINS 4-600 MAN GARRISON ON ITA ABU, LARGEST SPRATLY. SOME TAIWAN SOURCES SEE GVN ACTION AS "LIKE WAVING A RED FLAG IN FRONT OF A BULL" (WP).

3. REUTER SAIGON QUOTES GVN MFA THAT HIS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY PROTESTED TAIWAN CLAIM TO PARACELS, AND THAT TAIWAN CLAIM WAS MADE ONLY BECAUSE OF BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT "THERE IS ONLY ONE CHINA". MFA TELLS REPORTERS THAT GVN MAY RAISE ISSUE AT WORLD CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL WATERS IN VENEZUELA LATER THIS YEAR. REUTER ADDS THAT SVN EMBASSIES AT LONDON AND PARIS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DIG UP ANY HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS THAT MIGHT PROVE GVN SOVEREIGNTY OVER PARACELS.

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4. AP SAIGON (SUN) QUOTES GVN OFFICIALS THAT SOME LANDOWNERS ARE PAYING SOLDIERS TO TERRORIZE AND DRIVE AWAY REFUGEES FROM RESETTLEMENT SITES WANTED BY SPECULATORS. COMMENT CAME IN REPLY TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS AFTER RAID ON RESETTLEMENT AREA IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE IN WHICH MILITARY KILLED ONE WOMAN AND WOUNDED SEVERAL PEOPLE. BUDDHIST MONK SAID RAIDERS HAD BEEN PAID

BY WEALTHY LANDLORD. GVN SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER  
ORDERS INVESTIGATION, DEMANDS LOCAL OFFICIALS GUARANTEE  
SAFETY OF REFUGEES, SAYS WAS TOLD THAT OTHER SIMILAR  
INCIDENTS HAD OCCURRED BUT WITHOUT DEATHS.

5. TWO ROCKETS HIT NORTHERN PP SUBURB; THIRD HITS  
POCHENTONG, WOUNDING 10 CIVILIANS (AP, SUN; WP).

6. MCCOMBS (WP) FROM PP DESCRIBES RETURN HOME OF  
RESIDENTS WHO FLED SOUTHERN PP TO ESCAPE ARTILLERY  
BARRAGES; SAYS MOVEMENT MAY CONFIRM CERTAIN DIPLOMATS'  
VIEWS THAT REBEL STRATEGY OF TERROR AGAINST CIVILIANS  
HAS FAILED. PEOPLE, MOSTLY REFUGEES, ARE REPAIRING  
HOMES AND DEEPENING BUNKERS. SOME HOUSES DESTROYED,  
MANY PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK KILLED. CIVILIANS ANGRY

AT ENEMY, DO NOT HOLD GKR RESPONSIBLE FOR NOT PROTECTING  
THEM, SINCE "HOW COULD THE GOVERNMENT HAVE KNOWN  
WHERE SUCH A SHELLING WOULD TAKE PLACE?" MCCOMBS  
COMMENTS THAT LON NOL RESIDENCE IS IN AREA BUT HE  
IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN ANOTHER PART OF  
PP.

7. TWO LAOTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS SAY SOUVANNA TOLD  
THEM HE WOULD RESIGN IK AGREEMENT ON COALITION NOT  
REACHED NEXT MONTH (WP).

CHINA

8. WIRE PHOTOS SHOW KOSH CROSSING LO WU BRIDGE INTO  
HK (AP NYT, CHITRIB, PHINQ, SUN, NYDN; UPI, WP).  
KOSH'S PARENTS RECEIVED WORD AT THEIR HOME FROM DOS  
OF RELEASE SHORTLY BEFORE 1 AM THURSDAY. HE TELEPHONES  
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THEM LATER, SAYS HE WILL COME HOME FOR A VISIT  
AS SOON AS WELL ENOUGH TO TRAVEL (PHINQ).

9. GRC SOURCES SAY TAIWAN'S ECONOMY IS EXPECTED  
TO GROW BY 8 PERCENT OR MORE THIS YEAR DESPITE ENERGY  
SQUEEZE, AND WILL JUMP BY MORE THAN 10 PERCENT IF  
OIL EMBARGO IS LIFTED (UPI, PHINQ).

10. KORMER POLITBURO/CCP MEMBER WANG CHIA-HSIANG  
DEAD AT 68, NCNA ANNOUNCES (AP NYT, WP).

SINGAPORE

11. FOUR ARMED TERRORISTS WHO TRIED DESTROY SHELL  
REFINERY AND HIJACKED FERRYBOAT WITH FIVE HOSTAGES

ABROAD THURSDAY DROP NOTE OVERBOARD SAYING THEY ARE ACTING FOR "SOLIDARITY WITH VIETNAM REVOLUTIONAL PEOPLE, AND FOR MAKING REVOLUTIONAL SITUATION AFTER CONSIDERING THE SITUATION OF TODAY'S OIL CRISIS" (AP NYDN, SUN, NYT; UPI, CHITRIB; CSM; WP). NYT TOKYO NOTES SOME SAY THEY ARE MEMBERS OF JAPANESE RED ARMY; NOTES GROUP CONSIDERS ITSELF GENUINE DISCIPLE OF MAO AND HAS TRIED ADOPT HIS GUERRILLA TACTICS. GROUP REPORTED BY INFORMED JAPANESE SOURCES TO HAVE RECEIVED MONEY FROM PEKING THROUGH JAPANESE TRADING COMPANIES AND CHINESE TRADE/DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN TOKYO.

12. REUTER SINGAPORE REPORTS JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TRIED FRIDAY TO NEGOTIATE WITH GUERRILLA GROUP ON COMMAND DEERED FERRYBOAT, BUT TALKS APPARENTLY BROKE DOWN.

JAPAN

13. JAPANESE COURT ACQUITS REPORTER ACCUSED OF ILLEGALLY OBTAINING COPIES OF 3 SECRET DIPLOMATIC CABLES IN 1972, AND RULES THAT GAIMUSHO SECRETARY WHO ADMITTED GIVING\*NEWSMAN DOCUMENTS WAS GUILTY OF VIOLATING STATE SECRECY LAW. NYT'S HALLORAN, IN TOKYO, OBSERVES THAT CASE WAS CONSIDERED FIRST TEST OF PRESS FREEDOM UNDER 1947 CONSTITUTION. WOMAN INVOLVED WAS SECRETARY UNCLASSIFIED

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TO YASUKAWA, THEN DEPUTY VICE FM. OBERDORKER (WP), IN TOKYO, RECALLS CASE WAS KNOWN AS JAPAN'S "PENTAGON PAPERS" CASE AND THAT YASUKAWA HAD BEEN RELIEVED OF HIS HIGH POST AND REASSIGNED TO MEANINGLESS GAIMUSHO POST AS GESTURE OF GOVT. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECRETARY'S MISDEEDS. RECALLS THAT REVELATION OF SECRET OKINAWA JOCUMENTS "CAUSED MORE EMBARRASSMENT THAN INDIGNATION"; AND BECAUSE OF REPORTORIAL METHODS INVOLVED AND LEAK OF INFO TO POLITICIAN RATHER THAN OUTRIGHT PUBLICATION, "EVEN JOURNALISTS HAD AMBIGUOUS FEELINGS" ABOUT CASE.

THAILAND

14. YAMANI ARRIVES IN BANGKOK FOR TALKS, WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO INCLUDE DETAILS OF OIL DEAL WITH RTG (WP).

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

15. WP EDIT CHARACTERIZES US-DRV ACTIONS ON MIA ISSUE AS "CYNICAL AFFAIR". AS WITH POWS, HANOI

HAS USED MIAS AS POLITICAL LEVER, BUT WASHINGTON,  
RATHER THAN PAY DEMANDED POLITICAL PRICE, SOUGHT  
TO CHARACTERIZE ISSUE AS STRICTLY HUMANITARIAN.  
AND AS BEFORE, IT'S HARD TO SEE WHICH OF TWO COUNTRIES  
IS THE MORE CYNICAL. HANOI AND PRG USED SESSIONS  
OF MIA UNIT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ALLEGED C-K VIO  
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